

"LET THE BIDDING BEGIN!"

by Jessica Eslinger

At *exactly* 2 p.m., the door to the meeting room is closed and bidders for construction of the Ramona Street Improvement project sit eagerly, awaiting their potential new job. Gerry Fletcher, Senior Clerk for Design Engineering, sits in the front row, pencil in hand, ready to record the names and estimates of six bidders.

"All pertinent bid information will be read at this meeting," announces Bid Officer Evie Stainbrook of Purchasing and Contracting. "You are permitted to make notes. Information read at this bid opening will be the name and city of each bidder and their bid pricing."

As each envelope is quickly opened revealing its contents, Fletcher is neatly recording names and numbers, keeping her eye out for the lowest bidder. Once the reading is complete, Stainbrook declares the "apparent low bidder." The bid opening takes only 10 minutes, but Fletcher and her co-workers, Glenn Sallenbach, Greg Richards, Harshal Salway and Julie Davis, spend several days compiling and reviewing the project books.

"Not many people know what I do," said Fletcher, nine-year veteran of the County bid process.

She's responsible for a variety of important yet occasionally tedious tasks. And she's quick to state that a lot of work goes into each bid project.

Fletcher receives several bid projects a week, ranging anywhere from \$100,000 to several million dollars. As soon as they're approved by the Board of Supervisors, reviewed and printed, she issues copies to Purchasing and Contracting. She also helps inform 12 contracting publishing houses, the DPW Webmaster and local newspapers. Copies are distributed four weeks before a given due date.

Contractors buy the project books from Purchasing and Contracting and must submit them by the time and date of the bid opening. Late bids are not accepted.

After the "apparent low bidder" is announced at the bid opening, Fletcher enters their name and cost information in a bid database. Then she conducts background research to verify their license and employee qualifications.



If all checks out, the project manager, deputy director and director authorize the contract award. Fletcher sends a letter of recommendation to award to Purchasing and Contracting, who then send out a notice to proceed to the contractor. All pertinent information is then given to DPW Construction Engineering. They make sure the contractor's work is completed according to requirements.

"What we do is so active, and every job is different," said Fletcher.

While her job is continuously busy, full of challenges and even some surprises, Fletcher is very happy with her career and plans on working the bid process until she retires.

Fletcher works on her latest project book.

BUILDING REPUTATION by REFERRAL

by Marsha Dececchi, Director's Office

DPW handles hundreds of inquiries from customers each year, many of which are called "referrals." Customers can be elected officials, residents, businesses, other departments, agencies, or DPW employees. Often, referrals alert us to a situation that can be addressed before it becomes more serious. They also give us a glimpse of what our customers care about.

The referral process involves many employees. The director's secretary is responsible for initiating, assigning, tracking and closing all referrals for the department. Each division has an assigned referral clerk who tracks referrals within their divisions, and division head's assign staff to investigate the inquiry and prepare a response. In April 2002, training was provided to staff who routinely track, investigate and respond to referrals. There are three types of referrals:

- CAO: Initiated by the Chief Administrative Office
- RTS: Initiated by the Deputy Chief Administrative Office
- DPW: Initiated by the department

DPW has an outstanding reputation for producing high-quality responses to referrals in a timely manner. We also process a lot of them. Between July 1, 2001, and July 1, 2002, DPW was assigned 196 CAO referrals, 97 RTS referrals and initiated 513 DPW referrals for a grand total of 806. Only 23 of the 513 DPW referrals were not closed in a timely manner, giving us an on-time closure rate of 97.2 percent.

Referrals are a way DPW can provide high quality service to the customers we serve.

JOURNEY OF ENDURANCE

Part Three: Planning Helped Reach the Goal

by Karen Jacobs, Training

In this final article in our series on the adventures of the Endurance and its crew, let's look at the importance of PLANNING.

The crew, stranded in the Antarctic, saved themselves through developing good plans and staying on course with those plans. They were a thousand miles from other human beings and hundreds of miles from solid land. They knew reaching safety was a daunting goal. In the same situation, some people would panic; the Endurance crew knew that although planning might be difficult, it was necessary for survival. Their success reaching safety is a powerful example of a goal met and a job well done.

We aren't in the Antarctic and our lives aren't in danger, but like the survivors of the Endurance, planning is important for our success too. That's why DPW asks each of you to work with your supervisor to plan for training and development. This spring, you completed an **Individual Training Plan**. Does your supervisor have a copy? Completing the training on your plan is one way you can show your ability to meet goals. During the year, your training plan may need adjustment, and that's ok. We encourage you to work with your supervisor to take the training you need as soon as practical.

Our training staff reviews and selects upcoming training opportunities and publishes a **Quarterly Training Calendar**. Typically with about 100 class listings, it's a terrific tool to use to fulfill your training needs and plan for future development. There are technical, computer, health and safety, and management classes, as well as workshops for career development. The County also offers a tuition reimbursement program for employees pursuing college degrees.

Take advantage of the County and DPW's large offering of development tools. Like the crew of the Endurance, we all need a plan that will work. Planning your training and development can help you enhance, not just survive, your job.

Belt Yourself For Safety

by Jack E. Thompson, Safety Officer

You've heard it before and you'll hear it again because it's a fact - seatbelts save lives. According to recent statistics, nearly 40 percent of all work-related fatalities each year are caused by motor vehicle accidents. Many of these could have been avoided if the drivers and passengers in these vehicles had been belted in. Industries with the largest number of fatal traffic accidents are transportation, public utilities, trucking and government service.

Consider this when you are driving or riding in a company vehicle. You must be trained before you get behind the wheel of any vehicle, whether it is a truck, sweeper or sedan. Talk to your supervisor about refresher training if you are uncertain about anything new regarding your vehicle, or if you have only driven it once or twice in the past few months. Seatbelts are the law. Get in the habit of wearing yours on and off the job. Before you know it, strapping on your seatbelt will be automatic.

Seatbelts are in your vehicle for a reason: to protect you and your passengers. Putting on your seatbelt takes only a second of your time. That second could very well save your life and or others around you. Remember, that seatbelts save lives and in minor accidents can reduce the severity of injuries. Every driver and passenger is required to buckle up before operating a motor vehicle!

DIVISION NEWS

[Land Development]

Eric Nelson: Engineer, Educator

by Jessica Eslinger

For 10 years, Eric Nelson, Assistant Engineer in Airports, has worked as a mentor and guest lecturer to students across San Diego. As a volunteer for the San Diego City Schools *Partnership in Education* Program, Nelson makes appearances each month at local elementary, junior high, high schools and colleges.

His speaking topics range from "The Beauty of Mathematics" and "Financial Planning" to "Highway Bridges."

"I use a different philosophy of teaching," Nelson said. "I start by describing a scenario or physical problem, and then use the appropriate equation to solve it."

He said most schools teach things the other way, equation first, which can be confusing. Adjusting to their age and grade level, Nelson draws pictures, shows slides and provides handouts so all students can grasp the topic.

Nelson has learned to tame even the most unruly classes. "I go in there and just command the class," said Nelson. "I show up early and scope out the 'hard guys.' I put them right in the front row where I can ask them lots of questions."



His motivation to teach began years ago, while working in the Nordstrom Credit Department. "I was amazed at how little people know about credit and joint accounts," said Nelson. He promised himself he'd use his natural teaching ability to share his own hard-earned knowledge with as many students as possible.

Though Nelson hasn't had much time to pursue additional opportunities in neighboring school districts, he has plans to do so.

"I try to go where the kids need me," said Nelson. *Nelson displays one of many "thank you" letters from students.*

[Management Services]

New Recycling Center

Aluminum cans, plastic bottles, glass and newspaper have a new home in Jacumba. On September 28, a ribbon-cutting ceremony kicked off operation of the new Boulevard-Jacumba Recycling Center. T-shirts and goodies were given to the first 75 people to drop off recyclables. County officials, including Supervisor Dianne Jacob and Recycling Specialist J Taylor were present to meet and answer questions from attendees.

"As a shared project of the Boulevard/Jacumba Community Improvement Association and County DPW, we anticipate a cleaner, less wasteful and more energy efficient environment," said Taylor.

The center, open Wednesdays and Saturdays, is located at 42748 Old Highway 80, Jacumba.

[Transportation Services]

Keeping County Roads Clean

We've all seen the bright-blue Adopt-A-Road signs around San Diego. Did you know the County oversees 53 adopted roads?

The Adopt-A-Road program designates sections of County-maintained roads for litter removal by private businesses or community groups. Participants apply for a permit and attend safety classes before adopting their two-mile stretch of road. DPW provides them with trash bags, orange safety vests and optional trash pick-up. For cleaning up their section at least four times a year, they get their name publicized on an Adopt-A-Road sign.

Groups keep their names on the Adopt-A-Road signs as long as their section is routinely cleaned. DPW depends on passers-by and employees to let us know how they're doing. If you notice an area that needs litter-removal, or would like more information on the program, please call Theresa Ollivierre at (858) 874-4040.